

Helping the Uninsured In Kentucky

Issue

"Overweight, diabetic, high blood pressure and no health insurance" are words that describe many of Kentucky's 576,500 uninsured. To a large extent this 14.3% of our state's population represent once working class people who are now the state's working poor. Of the Kentucky uninsured population:

- 35% do not have a medical home which increases the likelihood of poorer health outcomes,
- 13% cite the Emergency Room as their regular caregiver, and,
- Many uninsured report they lack the necessary resources to purchase prescribed medications.

Pharmaceutical companies do have Patient Assistance Programs available for low income persons but the complicated paperwork and frequent rule changes leave many individuals with no means of getting needed medications.

Intervention

Over the past 2 years \$75,000 of the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funds have gone to Health Kentucky, Inc. a nonprofit charitable organization that coordinates a statewide network of volunteer providers through the Kentucky Physicians Care program. The Kentucky Physicians Care provider network includes physicians, dentist, pharmacies and Pharmaceutical companies. Health Kentucky, Inc. works in collaboration with other public and private organizations that address the health-care needs of the poor and uninsured.

Health Kentucky, Inc. provides:

- public awareness campaigns utilizing radio,
- television spots and signage and,
- Recruitment of providers is accomplished through the awareness campaigns to targeted medical audiences.

Impact

In 2004 there were 41,710 uninsured Kentucky residents enrolled in the Kentucky Physician Care Program. 2,507 referrals for free services were provided to eligible clients to participating physicians, dentist and pharmacies through the toll free Kentucky Physicians Care Hotline. 97,799 free prescriptions were filled at participating pharmacies with a value of \$9,642,208.84.

Contact Information

John Hensley, Branch Manager
Healthcare Access Branch
Kentucky Department for Public Health
275 East Main Street, HS2WB
Frankfort, KY 40621
(502) 564-8996 x-3773